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(Mar. 17 - 31, 1952)

The output on industrial activities is diffuse in character but most of the official criticism is directed against weak spots in civilian construction. The 1951 industrial shortcomings in the Ukrainian SSR are revealed in a speech by Finance Minister Shchedrin in the context of the Republic's budget performance. Contained in his message also is an intimation that the workers are "overpaid" in certain industries. Passing reference is made to instances of false estimates, squandering and stealing at plants and other industrial establishments. The drive against inordinate production costs and waste in general is still vigorously pushed. The continuing inadequate performance of the lumber industry and, to a lesser extent, the Donets coal industry, claims increasing official attention. The acute shortage of industrial engineering skill in the USSR is inferentially admitted through a ludicrous incident publicized by PRAVDA.

In the field of ideology, attention is focused on painting and motion picture production both of which are said to be faltering in many ways. Remnants of capitalism in the minds of the people as well as old habits and customs "are still making themselves felt," according to the All-Union Society for the Propagation of Political and Scientific Knowledge. The Moscow City Party Committee calls for a higher caliber of university instructors particularly in social sciences.

The decree on retail price reductions is heavily publicized on domestic and foreign beams.

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INDUSTRY:

Ukrainian Performance Criticized: A great deal of what should have been done but was not is revealed in a lengthy budget message by Finance Minister Shchetinin before the Ukrainian Supreme Soviet (Mar. 27). The Ministries of the Local, Building Materials, Civilian Housing Construction, and Furniture Industries are said to have fallen short of their 1951 targets. Looking into the rising costs of production at some of the industrial enterprises, the Minister asserts that financial mismanagement, violations of "expenditure discipline," and an attitude of indifference to lower production costs are among the major contributing factors. Back of it all, it is inferred, is the lukewarm attitude of the management toward profitable operations (rentabelnost) which calls for a systematic reduction of production costs. An extreme case of cost variations is cited in connection with the Ministry of the Local Industry where the production of a child's bicycle in one plant is several times higher than the cost of producing an identical bicycle in another plant. Another example is that of the Southern Power Construction Trust (Trest Pivden-Energo-Bud), the largest of its kind in the Ukraine. Instead of lowering production costs and saving 3 million rubles, according to plan, the Trust showed an overexpenditure of 14 million.

Overpayment to workers, according to Shchetinin, contributes to "unprofitable operations" and should be discontinued at once. In the Lvov Furniture Trust, for example, the total payroll amounted to 103.8% of the plan whereas the average output per worker was only 95.5%. The Ministry of Civilian Housing Construction of the Ukrainian SSR has not only "failed to fulfill its 1951 construction plan" but also "completed the year with great losses." Serious dereliction of duty is also charged to the Ministry of Health Service for its failure to provide proper medical service for the population. In such large areas as Drogobych, Rovno, Kherson, and Dnepropetrovsk Oblasts the planned network of medical establishments in the rural areas "was not completed" in 1951.

Reviewing the Ukraine's industrial activities primarily from a financial point of view, Shchetinin judges the success or failure of a particular industry or enterprise by the way its appropriations are utilized. Most of his references to industrial shortcomings are therefore made in such terms as "improper utilization of allocations", overexpenditure or use of appropriations for purposes "not originally planned." Thus some unnamed Republican and local organs of Soviet administration are said to be tolerating cases of financial abuse, and violations of "State and expenditure" discipline.

There were cases of wrong utilization of allocations in the local budgets and squandering of allocations for capital repair of schools, hospitals and clubs and the construction of new administrative buildings.

Ukrainian version:

Po mistsevykh budgetakh dopuskayut nepravilno vykorystane assygnovan, dopuskayut vytrachanye koshtiv assygnovannykh na kapitalny remont shkil, lehareh, klubiv, na nove budivnitstvo, v tomu chisli administrativnykh budynkiv.

Abuses of a more serious nature, including theft, are said to be prevalent in the distribution of consumer goods at the rayon level. Not only is the quality of goods disregarded, as heretofore, but the quantity appears to be adversely affected by squandering and pilfering (rozstraty i kradizhki). Such practices have already cost the State over 8.5 million rubles in overexpenditures, in addition to the 9-million ruble loss incurred by the food distribution organizations.

Finance Minister Fadeyev's report before the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR (Mar. 27) is somewhat milder in tone. The chief target of his attack, however, is also the abuse of the average consumer. Referring to the assortment of consumer goods, the Minister reveals that in 1951 the Ministry of the Local Industry was short 65 varieties of mass consumption goods and the Industrial Cooperative System (promyslovaya kooperatsia) 42, including furniture, household dishes and utensils, and others. The supply of inferior quality goods (dostavka nedobrokachestvennykh izdeliy) is almost taken for granted in a number of local trading organizations, while their losses and unnecessary overexpenditures are an additional burden on the budget (dopolnitelno obremenyaut budzhet). Production of inferior consumer goods is also attributed to the Republican Ministry of Light Industry. The losses it sustained in 1951 alone through quality reduction (ot ponizhennoy sortnosti) amounted to 21.8 million rubles.

"Estimate padding" (nezakonnoye zavyschenie smetnykh raskhodov), as revealed by both Fadeyev and Deputy Afanassyev on the same day, is being practiced by the planning organizations (proyektnye organizatsii) of the various industries on a large scale. Afanassyev in fact intimates that entire krajs, oblasts, and autonomous republics are involved in it. Cases of payroll account padding (nezakonno povyshennye stavki zarabotnoy platy) are particularly frequent, and the result is a top-heavy administrative machine. Fadeyev points out that a checkup on the personnel of 38 auto-transport organizations in Leningrad alone revealed that the "approved number of administrative staff members" (utverzhdennoy administrativno-upravlencheskiy apparat) was exceeded by 440 officials drawing a total salary of 279,000 rubles.

In a summarized talk for economics students (Mar. 26), Arutelyan suggests two basic methods which, if used simultaneously, will raise the output and lower production costs. They are the "extensive and intensive" (ekstensivnyy i intensivnyy) methods of production. The extensive method, though elaborated under 10 different points, is designed to eliminate bottlenecks and machine stoppages by improving the maintenance of the equipment and fixing responsibility on shops, teams, and individual workers for its proper operation. The intensive method, continues Arutelyan, is nontechnical in nature but just as important and offers "almost unlimited possibilities" for the development of the national economy. Its salient point is "fostering feelings of Soviet patriotism and a Communist attitude toward labor."

The Ministry of the Lumber Industry (Ministerstvo Lesnogo Khozaistva) has been the object of official attacks for some time. It is repeatedly referred to at the current Supreme Soviet sessions of the RSFSR, the Ukraine and elsewhere as having lagged behind the plan last year and showing little improvement in 1952. The Ministry's planning, according to Deputy Afanassyev, "does not always call for...the proper expenditure of State funds" (ne vseгда predusmatrivayet...pravilnoye raskhodovanie gosudarstvennykh sredstv).

The performance of the Ukrainian lumber industry, particularly in the Transcarpathian region, is also discussed in disparaging terms in Shchetinin's budget message. The output of semimanufactures in a number of lumber enterprises, he says, has actually decreased by 15%. This, in turn, has adversely affected the production of the building materials industry which incidentally is also working behind plan.

SOVETSKAYA RODINA (Mar. 18) declares bluntly that the lumber production and floating plan, having failed last year, is still "not progressing satisfactorily" this year. The paper intimates that the reason for the breakdown of the winter haulage plan -- performance less than 50% -- is the "inadequate care" taken of the lumber-floating workers. The trade union and Party organizations are therefore urgently requested to take a better look into the lumberjacks' living conditions and supply them with sufficient food, newspapers, books and "other means of political education and propaganda."

In an otherwise stereotyped collective letter to Stalin, the Donets Basin coal miners promise to make a better showing in the future and produce more and better coal. As discussed in previous CPW reports, collective letters to Stalin, despite their optimistic accounts of current or past achievements, are often actually prompted by failings and are designed to forestall official condemnation. The miners' reference to the many shortcomings (mnogo nedochetov) in their work which will presumably be eliminated is further amplified in the following assertion:

We are profoundly conscious of the fact that...the Motherland has a right to demand of us more coal...and particularly a definite qualitative improvement in the fulfillment of the State plan.

Russian version:

My gluboki soznaem, chto...Rodina vprave trebovat ot nas bolshego uvelichenia dobychi uglia... i osobenno rezkogo uluchshenia kachestvennikh pokazateley vypolnenia gosudarstvennogo plana.

Commenting editorially on the miners' "eagerness" to increase production and their "challenge" to the Kuznets Basin miners to emulate their example, PRAVDA (Mar. 18) calls upon all the Party organizations of the mining areas to encourage their Socialist competition and "eliminate the elements of formalism in this undertaking" (ustranyat elementy formalizma v etom dele). The triple purpose of Socialist competition, the paper reiterates, is greater production, higher quality and lower costs.

Kazakh SSR, says KAZAKHSTANSKAY. PRAVDA (Mar. 29), is the largest nonferrous metallurgical base in the Soviet Union but the performance of its mining industry leaves much to be desired.

Many mining brigades are not fulfilling their ore extraction plans owing to bad labor organization. Machines regularly remain idle...the excavator part is not working at full capacity...

The editorial does not offer any additional details beyond the remark that "due importance" is not attached to the utilization of machinery. East Kazakhstan, South Kazakhstan, Karaganda, and Taldy Kurgan Oblasts are urged to "improve their management" of the mining industry and see to it that mining equipment is utilized to full capacity. Passing reference to the shortcomings on the Emba oilfields is made by the same paper on Mar. 20. Technical deficiencies are said to "impede the raising of the fuel output," and well-drilling is behind the plan:

...it is first of all necessary to eliminate the underestimation of the importance of drilling works, to get rid of idleness and breakdowns.

The lack of economy and thrift (ekonomia i berezhlivost) in production is assailed by Abrasimov in a PRAVDA article on Mar. 25. Falsification of reports to show the completion of production plans has recently been uncovered in a number of places in Byelorussia, he says. Anti-State activity of unscrupulous managers (anti-gosudarstvennaya deyatelnost nedobrosovestnykh khozaistvennikov) is also seen in their endeavor to stockpile raw materials and equipment far above the "prescribed reserves" (normativnie zapasy).

Republican Party conferences now in session, says Abrasimov, have uncovered numerous instances of squandering State funds, idle machinery and poor production quality. Such cases are not accidental and "those found guilty of mismanagement and squandering are now being prosecuted" (konkretnie vinovniki bezkhozaiistvennosti i rastochitelstva privlekayutsia k otvetstvennosti). The Byelorussian Ministry of Light Industry is said to have stockpiled 8 million rubles' worth of raw materials above the prescribed level, while a large number of machine tools needed elsewhere was found in the warehouses of the Ministry for the Construction of Machine-Building Enterprises.

Lack of Vigilance in Industry Assailed: Under the caption "Let's Be Acquainted" (Budem Znakomy) PRAVDA reproduces a KROKODIL article by Vesenin with photographs of six executives of widely scattered industries who fell victim to their own un-Bolshevik gullibility. (Mar. 24, not broadcast). Always in search of qualified workers, none of these officials it appears, seemed to bother much about references when a certain Timofeyev (whose enlarged photograph appears in the center) introduced himself to them at different times as a construction engineer (inzhenier-stroitel). Appointed to various executive positions, including one of chief engineer of a lumber trust, this "construction engineer" stayed on for a while and then absconded with all the money he could put his hands on. The six short-term jobs netted him a total of over 167,000 rubles. What the paper is particularly scornful about is how a man who had never taken up engineering could hold on to a responsible post as long as a year and a half without being discovered as was the case at the "Rosmontazhstroy" construction project in Ryazan Oblast! A mere glance at his passport would have revealed that Timofeyev had never even attended any college, had nothing to do with engineering but was "serving deportation time away from his native district" (otbyval nakazanie vdali ot rodnykh mest) for crimes committed in his hometown. Vigilance, it is pointed out, is not to be dismissed lightheartedly, for the lack of it may lead to disastrous consequences. Why don't you, gullible citizens, get together, the article concludes, compare notes and tell each other "how you happened to become ne'er-do-wells and blinking loafers" (kak vy stali 'shliapami' i rotozeyami).

IDEOLOGICAL AFFAIRS:

The "Theory of Conflictlessness" criticized: Discussing the recent Stalin awards for outstanding works of art and literature, PRAVDA (Mar. 15) says that, great as they are, these achievements should not blind anyone to the continuing serious shortcomings in those fields, particularly in theatrical art. Life, says the editorial, should not be treated superficially, and "one must not overlook or fail to expose the existing contradictions." These contradictions, oddly enough, are mentioned in the context of people rather than life per se since "there are still hypocritical people and negative types in our midst." (U nas vstrechayutsia eshche i ludi falshivie, otritsatelnye tipy). But such people, it is claimed, are not always portrayed as they should be: "they must be brought into the limelight" (ikh nado vyvodit na chistuyu sodu). These shortcomings are very much evident in the repertoires which still lack "good contemporary plays." Soviet playwrights, the paper continues, have not studied life well enough, and this is responsible for the "theory of conflictlessness" (teoria bezkonfliktnosti) that has spread among them. That theory, the paper contends, is misleading and "often led to deviations from the truth and unrealistic interpretation of life's phenomena."

The "one-sidedness" (odnostoronnost) of Soviet motion pictures which "diminishes the ideological and artistic value" (snizhayet ideino-khudozhestvennuyu tsennost) of the pictures is discussed in highly critical terms in a PRAVDA article by Bolshakov, USSR Minister of Cinematography (Mar. 18, not broadcast). Many producers of movie comedies, he says, have been veering away from the true interpretation of Soviet reality. They have been trying to "get a laugh out of the audience" (vyzvat smekh u zritelei).

not by tackling the seamy side of life but by making the behavior of our "positive heroes" (polozhitelnie geroi) appear in a ridiculous light. Such false and artificial comical situations have nothing in common with the reality of life (s zhiznennoy pravdy). Bolshakov also wants to know why many producers persistently refrain from depicting the personal life of workers and collective farmers, their multifarious spiritual desires and interests:

Reading certain scenarios, one would think that the entire life of the worker is spent in the plant among machines and mechanisms while the life of the peasants is confined to the machinery on the field.

Russian version:

Chitaya imie stsenerii, mozno podumat, chto vsia zhizn rabochego protekayet na zavode sredi stankov i mekhanizmov, a zhizn krestyan -- na pole sredi mashin.

The fact that only two paintings were awarded Stalin Prizes is a sorry commentary on the progress of that branch of art, according to Besspalov, chairman of the USSR Art Committee (Mar. 18). Painting could have been more progressive and expressive if the Soviet artists would only make an effort to overcome the "substantial shortcomings" (sushchestvennie nedostatki) in their work. The recent All-Union Art Exhibition in Moscow, says Besspalov, has revealed instances of "haste and incompleteness" (speshki, nedorabotannost) in most of the exhibits. The most important drawback in the artists' work is their superficial familiarity with Soviet reality: they are unable...to depict the Soviet man as he really is. That is why most of the paintings are devoid of any specific content (bezsyuzhetnie), are uniformly dull and "spiritually impoverished" (dukhovno obednennye). The Soviet artist, the article concludes, "cannot and must not ... live on past successes" (ne mozhet i ne dolzhen ... zhit proshlyimi uspekhami); he must not lag behind the ever-growing demands of the Soviet people.

A report from Moscow (Mar. 23) speaks of the recent conference of the Capital Party Committee to look into the affairs of the city's 91 colleges. It is disclosed that a number of professors resort to "oversimplification and vulgarization" (uproschenchestvo i vulgarizatsia) in the treatment of the theoretical questions. A number of colleges are said to be using the wrong approach to the teaching of social and economic sciences. This is because in numerous instances the scientific qualifications of the instructors are patently inadequate for their jobs. The report does not offer any specific details as to the ideological errors committed by the professors in question, but states that the Ministry for Higher Education was subjected to serious criticism for its shortcomings in the "guidance" of the social science departments of the Moscow universities.

Ideological aberrations of a different nature are dealt within two broadcasts from the Ukraine. VILNA UKRAINA (Mar. 18) reminds its readers that "remnants of capitalism still linger in the memories of some people". These people, Stalin is quoted as having said, are far more dangerous in the sphere of national questions than in any other sphere: "In our country...there is no room for the emergence of bourgeois ideology, including bourgeois nationalism." The paper calls for a "decisive struggle against all manifestation of bourgeois ideology and above all Ukrainian bourgeois nationalism. Discussing the political education in the enlarged collective farms, RYANSKA UKRAINA (Mar. 21) says that the cultural achievements of the Great Russian people are not sufficiently extolled and that not enough lectures are given on remnants of Ukrainian nationalist ideology, "the worst enemy of the Ukrainian people."

Remnants of capitalism in the people's minds is also the subject of a talk by Prof. Konstantinov of the All-Union Society for the Propagation of Political and Scientific Knowledge (Home Service, Mar. 29). Discouraging at some length on the "hideous aspect" of bourgeois democracy and right-wing Socialism, the professor admits that these twin evils have not been entirely eliminated in the Socialist Motherland:

The Bolshevik Party...is pushing a determined offensive against ideological survivals hostile to Socialism...against all sorts of old habits, customs and survivals of capitalism in the minds of the people which still make themselves felt in various spheres of our life.

Russian version:

Bolshevitskaya partiia...vedet reshitelnoye nastuplenie protiv ostatkov vrazhdebnoi sotsializma ideologii... boryatsia so vsiakogo roda starymi privychkami, navykami i perezhitkami kapitalizma v soznanii ludey, kotorige eshche dayut o sebe znat v razlichnykh oblastakh nashey zhizni.